

**Center for a New American Security (CNAS)**  
**Conference on Asian Pacific Security**  
**Panel Discussion**  
**Admiral John Richardson, CNO**  
**Dr. Patrick Cronin, CNAS**  
**Doug Jehl, Washington Post - Moderator**  
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**Moderator:** Admiral, let me start off, we're going to talk a lot about China and a lot about Asia in this next hour, but I hope we can start by talking a little bit about the global challenge, and the global challenge you face as you have a Navy that in number of ships is as small as the Navy has been since before World War I. How do you maintain the kind of global presence that you're asked to maintain and orchestrate a pivot to Asia that you're also asked to maintain with a force as large or small as you have?

**Admiral Richardson:** A great question, and before I get started though, I do want to say how terrific it is to be here in this company and also just put a plug in for the Center for a New American Security because their thinking is so clear, their products are so pragmatic. They've certainly helped me think through some of the tougher decisions, so it's a real honor to be here in this venue.

With respect to the changing security environment, I would say, just as the introduction said, that it's getting complex in so many ways. Right? We were discussing just before we came in here that while we've been at sea, if you will, for millennia, the traffic over the seas has picked up by between 300 and 400 percent, depending upon the area of the world that you're talking about. Tripled to quadrupled in the last 25 years. And so you can see this growing importance of the maritime. I think that these next 20-25 years are going to be very important for the maritime, very important for maritime security for the United States, and will put responsibilities and demands on the entire maritime security team which is not only the U.S. Navy, but also the Coast Guard, also the Marine Corps, also the Merchant Marines. So that whole team is going to have to really step up and address those responsibilities.

With respect to how we address them. One, I have really made the point that we have got to move faster to keep up with the pace. We talked about the classic maritime traffic. That's picked up tremendously. But that shape that rises from Moore's

Law, that exponential shape, is everywhere that we look. Right? So the amount of information in the world right now is doubling roughly every two years.

The rate at which technology is moving into the system is increasingly fast, and it's not just information technologies. It's three-dimensional printing, it's genetic technologies, it's artificial intelligence. All those things that are enabled by IT.

So the Navy fundamentally has to be able to move faster to be able to meet our potential as close as we can, and certainly meet our responsibilities to stay ahead of our competitors.

To do that, we've been given relatively flat if not slightly declining resources and so that growing gap is really what consumes our leadership right now. How are we going to address that?

I believe fundamentally that it's not going to just be new technologies or new things, but it's going to be the combinations of those things and the unique and creative ways that are going to allow us to ride that exponential curve as closely as we can.

**Moderator:** And in terms of the competitors out there, Patrick, maybe you can help us set the stage in talking not just about China, but maybe first remind us of what's changed in the atmosphere, the environment, with capabilities and ambitions of Japan, India, Russia, other naval powers.

**Dr. Cronin:** Well fortunately, many of those capabilities are allies, and allied capability. Japan in particular has really taken the sort of gloves off by taking the restraints of politics and removing them and essentially trying to become a more normal regular power. But doing so still very defensively. Still focused on defensive capabilities. But the idea that Japan now under their new National Security Law and the new Bilateral Defense Guidelines that Secretary Carter mentioned in his speech, can think about collective self-defense, means that they can now cooperate with other U.S. allies like Australia and emerging partners like India or Vietnam or other allies like the Philippines. So that's a good development from a U.S. perspective where we're no longer just the predominant power. We need increasingly contributions and more burden-sharing from other like-minded countries and allies and partners. That's the good news.

The bad news is that everybody's getting bigger and stronger and more capable. Innovation is being driven not just by the United States by any means. It's increasingly being driven by others. And non-state actors, but also China now. You look at the supercomputer gains that China's made that was reported in today's Wall Street Journal, for instance. There's no doubt that the United States may not always have the lead in a lot of these technologies that we hope will be part of a so-called third offset strategy that will kind of rekindle our ability to allow power projection even where there are ubiquitous precision strike regimes, as some colleagues would put it.

North Korea, of course, is quite different from the China problem. Not that it looks like China, and China is not a threat as much as a competitor, a long-term competition, and a challenge for cooperation at the same time. North Korea is a definite threat and could change the situation for the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet and Northeast Asia and beyond very quickly, especially if it starts to be able to deploy even an intermediate range nuclear missile.

Then you've got the low-lying gray zone areas that [Mira Rapp Cooper] was referring to, this convergence between gray power competition for the long term, and the short term gray zone, salami-slicing, irregular warfare, political warfare, information warfare challenges that are going on and we see this throughout the Middle East, we see it with Russia, we see it with China. This is a global problem as well.

Then there's just the everyday protect the planet, the people, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, search and rescue operations, trying to just cooperate on anti-piracy. You think about what could be going on in the South China Sea, outside of the South China Sea, off Borneo, for instance, in the Sulu and Celebes Seas, for instance, where Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines off Mindanao where the new President-Elect Duterte is coming from, there is growing cooperation for patrols for anti-piracy, where there's enormous trafficking and piracy. The U.S. as an ally of the Philippines perhaps could get involved with that operation. It seems like a great place to send maritime patrol aircraft, as well as participate in anti-piracy issues.

I wonder what Admiral Richardson might have to say about that.

**Admiral Richardson:** I would advocate and completely support anything that goes towards the regional security architecture, that is a shared responsibility. Maybe those nations and regions supported by the United States [inaudible], so you see, in fact as I've moved around the world everywhere I go, whether it's 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet in Asia; whether it's the 5<sup>th</sup> Fleet in the Middle East; the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet in Europe. Those multinational architectures from a maritime context, they're everywhere we are, and they have very unique challenges, but they're addressing those challenges in very unique ways.

So you mentioned piracy, that off the Horn of Africa has been pretty much eliminated for now, and that is a multinational coalition that has addressed that problem.

One of the opportunities that this information age provides us is the chance to bring these multinational coalitions together with the wide spectrum of capabilities and caveats. They're going to be able to contribute to different extents, but by virtue of these information technologies we can, everybody can find their place of maximum contribution and so there will be folks who can really participate in the high end, very technically demanding parts of maritime security. There will be folks sort of in the middle and then folks who are contributing capacity more than capability. But the information sharing types of technologies allow us all to maximize the overall contribution from that maritime coalition.

**Moderator:** Focusing on China for a bit now. We've all focused in the last three or four years on China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and the sense of tension there. What is it about China's capabilities that have changed, that are changing, that present a challenge to you and your forces?

**Admiral Richardson:** I think there is this long-range precision strike capability that certainly, everybody says A2AD. A2AD is sort of an aspiration. The actual execution of that is much more difficult. So sort of my summer project is to try and put that in perspective, that exercising anti-access and area denial is really nothing new. It's been something that's been part of warfare since it began.

The combination of ubiquitous ISR, long-range precision strike weapons, takes that to the next step and demands a response. So that's one dimension that is not only in the South China Sea, but really as it proliferates around the world is growing more challenging for everybody, everywhere.

That's extended by the land reclamation and then the militarization of those things. So that type of technology gets extended out, potentially, by virtue of those sorts of measures, really raising a lot of questions, destabilizing that region. Just because there's not a clear understanding of what the intentions are there.

So I would say that combination of technologies, to give you that suite of capabilities, is really one of the pressing concerns right now. In practical terms, though, what does that mean? It means you can't get safely as close to territory as you might have done?

**Admiral Richardson:** Well, it means that in the cleanest form, the uninterrupted frictionless plane, you have the ability to sense a target much more capably and quickly around the world. You've got the ability then to transmit that information back to a weapon system that can reach out at a fairly long range, and it is precision-guided towards those coordinates that the targeting of the ISR provided it. So you know, you're talking hundreds of miles right? Now. So that raises a challenge. Our response would be to inject a lot of friction into that system. We would just at every step of the way look to make that much more difficult.

But what you see often is you see a display, let's say. Here's a launcher, here's a circle with a radius of 700 miles, and it's solid color black inside that like hey, you can't go. It's just, that's just not the reality of the situation.

So you've got this highly maneuverable force that has a suite of capabilities that force can bring to bear to inject uncertainty and difficulty into that entire system.

**Moderator:** So you have two carrier battle groups operating today in, at least this weekend, in the region of the Philippines. What signals should allies and adversaries draw from that?

**Admiral Richardson:** I think there's, one, for us, we don't get to do two carrier operations very often. Just our readiness model has been leaned out that we are not that often have two carrier strike groups in the same body of water. So it's a terrific opportunity for us just to do some high end warfighting and training.

But I think both here and in the Mediterranean, it's a signal to everybody in the region that we're committed, we're going to be there for our allies, to reassure them, and for anybody who wants to destabilize that region we hope there's a deterrent message there as well.

**Dr. Cronin:** Doug, if I can just jump in. It's obviously a critically important question, and the question is can the United States maintain that capability going forward over the coming decades in light of other changes in the region, especially China's modernization.

So the anti-access area denial moniker, the idea that China could really complicate a forward presence in defense of say Taiwan. Back in 1995, '96, 20 years ago, the United States used two carrier battle groups nearby in the vicinity of Taiwan when China had fired, exercised missiles near Taiwan in protest of tensions.

Could we do that today without worrying about a higher degree of risk from the missile threat, from the submarine threat that China's, and air threat as well, that China's now built in? Or conversely, not at the high end but at the low end, building up non-military capabilities that are dual use. The island building in the South China Sea. If after the arbitration ruling that may come as early as next week now, China doesn't like the result, what if they just ignore the carriers that we have in the vicinity of the Philippines, ignore the new President-Elect in the Philippines, and say we're moving our dredges into Scarborough Shoal and we're actually not just commandeering the waters and the reef, we're actually going to build our own artificial island here as well. And what are you going to do about it? It subverts international law through gray zone, salami-slicing techniques.

So the question is, can we harness our considerable power and presence to reassure allies, to build a regional common view of what the rules ought to be that should be constructed? And can we get China ultimately to join that inclusive rules base? That's a huge strategic challenge.

**Admiral Richardson:** Exactly. We have to, even though things are coming faster and faster, changes, those curves are steep. There is still kind of a long view to this thing, and at the end of that longer time line we want a healthy, cooperative China who has really benefited from this architecture of rules-based type of trade.

It's also important to mention, while we touch on trade, that the security element is just one part of this. Right? There is an economic element which is tremendous. At least as important as security in the eyes of many of the partners in the region. Then there's certainly the diplomatic element. So there's a number of things that have to, they could combine together to move this thing gradually in the direction that it would be beneficial for everybody. Certainly, you know, cooperation would be treat. Competition is fine. Conflict is the thing that we really want to avoid.

**Moderator:** There's been talk at various points about the idea of stationing a second carrier at Subic or Cameron Bay or somewhere else. Is that a realistic possibility?

**Admiral Richardson:** The economics of that are tremendous, and so just the hosting of a capability like that is a huge undertaking so we'd have to examine that for a long time. And then of course the host nation, they have to invite us to do that. So there's a few steps that we'd have to get through. It's not a unilateral decision.

**Moderator:** It ain't going to happen, is what you're saying.  
[Laughter].

**Dr. Cronin:** Not without a real significant change to the regional security environment, and a recognition at home that we have to do more. It's much easier to move smaller pieces and components. I mentioned the maritime patrol aircraft. That squadron can be anywhere in the region within a few days. And a significant presence.

**Admiral Richardson:** You mentioned these maritime patrol aircraft a couple of times, and we are doing an awful lot not only to establish maritime domain awareness in the region for ourselves, but also for our partners. And the P8 aircraft is one of these things that has really been almost a partnership building type of a capability that just has everybody looking for more information, more awareness. This has been a terrific fulcrum, if you will, to allow that.

**Moderator:** As tensions have ratcheted up in the region, and as you do things like increase the tempo with the second carrier group, how conscious are you of what you need to do to try to reduce tensions, to keep them from getting out of hand, to make sure the signal is interpreted in the right way?

**Admiral Richardson:** That's really what we try and do. We're not out there to increase tensions. I mean we mentioned freedom of navigation operations in the introduction. What could be less confrontative than just an operation that sails, say a ship completely consistent with existing international law just advocates for that system. So those types of things are advocating for the right thing without being confrontational.

The RIMPAC exercise is another great example. So the invitation is still there for the Chinese to participate in RIMPAC and these are the sorts of things that, you know, bring us all together in sort of positive, constructive ways that as my counterpart and I and my counterparts around the world talk about, it's our responsibility to increase decision space for our leadership, and I think that these sorts of exercises do that.

**Moderator:** We were talking ahead of time, and you said you're going to make a visit to China next month to meet with your counterpart. Talk about the importance of that kind of personal relationship.

**Admiral Richardson:** I think they're extremely important. As was pointed out, I've had a number of conversations with him already and I look very much forward to meeting him in person. These personal relationships are extremely important, particularly if something should happen and we need to talk to each other on short notice, perhaps deescalate a situation or explain what really happened. This is what I intend to do, this is what I intend not to do. So we keep things on an even keel, if you will.

**Moderator:** And as you look at what could happen in the weeks ahead with the arbitration decision, what do your forecasts say? Is that going to be a moment that's particularly fraught?

**Admiral Richardson:** I think it's a great opportunity. We'll just have to see it unfold. The only thing that I can say about my predictions is I've got them about 100 percent wrong. [Laughter]. I won't try to extend that record here.

**Moderator:** Patrick, can you weigh in on that front? What should we be expecting as people wait to hear this ruling?

**Dr. Cronin:** Well, a lot will depend on China's reaction. China's watching to see whether they're going to be



significantly disadvantaged by the ruling and by the actions that others like the Philippines take in response to the ruling. So it could quickly ratchet up and escalate in terms of political tension. It's not likely to lead to military direct confrontation, but you can never be sure. It's also not likely to be resolved this year or by one international ruling, no matter how brilliant the arbitrators are.

So it's going to be a long-term inheritance for the next administration and for the region, but one thing we might look for some hope for is that the Chinese have been looking to ratchet down the tensions even while they keep trying to move their influence forward. They've certainly made in-roads with the other four Southeast Asia claimant states -- Brunei, Malaysia, and they've been citing Malaysia as an example for the Philippines to follow, and now the President-Elect Duterte of the Philippines coming into office on the 30<sup>th</sup>. His at least signal that he wants to study the ruling, would be interested in new investments, may not immediately take a ski jet out to Scarborough Shoal and plant the flag. We're not sure. That's a bit of a wild card. And Vietnam, very very important to this, has been willing and has a longstanding understanding of how to balance that relationship with China. Pushing their interests, but at the same time not too far.

So there's some hope after the Admiral's visit that maybe we're going to be at least managing the tensions and looking for constructive solutions. But those tensions are not going to end anytime soon.

**Admiral Richardson:** The fact that the court is addressing this, this is a process by which these disputes should be resolved and so that exercise of that authority I think will be a move in the right direction.

**Moderator:** So as we head into this moment, though, what should the Philippines expect from the United States in terms of standing up for its interests? And on the other side of things, what should we expect of countries like the Philippines and Vietnam to be doing with their own navies in asserting their own interests?

**Admiral Richardson:** Well, we're going to be there in that region for the Philippines, our ally, and so that goes without saying.

And then in my interactions with my counterparts, with the Philippine Navy, with the Vietnamese Navy. There is a growing sense and a growing desire for cooperation, collaboration. And so we'll just continue to try and develop those relationships. They're going to have a combination of regional interests and national interests they're going to have to pursue. We'll certainly have common interests. I mean it's kind of fundamental. I don't mean to be too basic here, but I would say that overall there's a growing enthusiasm for cooperation and we look forward to partnering with those folks.

**Dr. Cronin:** We truly are trying to build up some minimal effective credible defense for our partners. We've put out a new report called Dynamic Balance and we talk about a road map for building allies and partners in the region over the next 10-20 years. This is a long term process. It's an international process as well. It's not just the United States. There are many countries that are eager to build this sort of network of security relations, including starting with information sharing. Information sharing being almost the public good for the region, for all to be able to partake, to deal with disasters, but also to understand what is transparent and should be transparent for all in what's happening in places like the South China Sea. But there's still no substitute for a major power like the United States remaining engaged, presence, credible, clear, and yet keeping its options open.

**Admiral Richardson:** Patrick hit on a couple of things that are sort of the building blocks for starting these types of relations, so information sharing certainly being one. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief types of exercises and cooperation is another. Many nations in the region are getting submarine forces. And there are aspects of submarine operations, submarine rescue, submarine safety, those sorts of things where there's a good opportunity for cooperation to everybody's benefit. So these are the building blocks by which you can start to build a more meaningful relationship, you know, with the backdrop of our presence there in the region as well.

**Moderator:** You talked a bit about limited resources at the beginning, and we were talking ahead of time about what you called a readiness deficit. The cumulative impact that the last 15 years of conflict has had on the Navy. How does that consciousness of that deficit, of those limits, play into your decisions as you figure out how to handle these tensions in Asia in particular?

**Admiral Richardson:** It has been a long term sort of accumulation of readiness data, if you will. It's a hard thing to articulate because it manifests itself in subtle ways. You know, ship maintenance, aircraft maintenance, maybe even personnel rotations. The leading indicators of these things are often really faint and hard to detect, and so you sort of find yourself in a challenging situation without a whole lot of lead time sometimes.

So we're watching that all very carefully, establishing what might be called a sustainable or supply-based type of an approach where we're not putting more debt on our readiness credit card.

So right now I can't say that I'm at the point where I'm taking that debt off. I'm not making that debt any smaller. But I don't think I'm making it any bigger right now either. I'm kind of able to make my monthly payments. Because the demands are still considerable.

But with respect to people, we're still making our marks with respect to retention and recruiting. We are looking very heavily at our maintenance programs, both in the public and private shipyards and the aircraft depots to make sure that we are really applying the most sophisticated techniques to get that important work done.

**Dr. Cronin:** Doug, I think the CNO has done a terrific job so far, setting a new direction. But I hope the country doesn't short-change -- this is not the DC Metro. You know, we can get by riding Bike Share in Washington, DC to get to work, but I don't think we want our national security to depend on a Bike Share program for our Navy. So this is a serious business.

I know you're going to want to take some questions from the audience as well.

**Moderator:** Yeah, I want to shift and open it up to the audience for questions for the CNO.

**Admiral Richardson:** Don't forget Dr. Cronin either. He's a wealth of knowledge.

**Audience:** Thank you very much. I'm a retired naval intelligence officer. As a matter of fact, joking aside, I'm a retired Commander of Naval Intelligence with an official designation of 007. [Laughter]. That being the code for the

leading three digits of the Social Security number where the number was issued, and in my case, Maine.

That aside, my concern is with Taiwan, which on the one hand in a very real sense is an ally, in the sense of Japan, the Philippines, and whatever. And on the other hand we have the longstanding position that Taiwan is part of China. There's a One China Policy on both sides. Not talked about as much now as it was in the era when I was on active duty.

But to what extent is there any sort of naval relationship that helps the U.S. policy that China, Mainland China and Taiwan should be mutually beneficial and ultimately in some future Utopia, reunited. But there must be no use of force involved in any reconciliation? What can we do with Taiwan that is useful but not provocative on that issue?

**Dr. Cronin:** If I can just say a few words about that important relationship. I was just at the presidential inauguration in Taipei, and it's very moving just to see the democratic process of Taiwan. This is the third time that they've moved from opposition parties, to an opposition party, taking over through a peaceful democratic election. That in itself is just impressive in terms of what's happening.

They're very keen to do something on defense, but they're also very realistic, and we can't do more than what the Taiwan people and government want to do. They're talking about spending more on defense, but they've been talking about that for some time. My colleague, [Harry Grace] has written a wonderful paper that I encourage you to read on our Taiwan security relationship. And there's a debate over, when you get to the specific issue of naval cooperation, can we help them with their submarine program? This is sort of this idea that if they can only have new submarines then they can really deter the threats. But that's a very very hard sell. And even if they built it indigenously, it's a long term investment and that's really where the new Democratic Progressive Party wants to focus.

So things like smart minds, suddenly become a much cheaper anti-access area denial capability that's very defensive, that might be realistic. May not be from the United States directly, but the idea of helping them with professionalization and training and strategic discussion. Those are areas that I find that there's easy rapport. But Admiral, I'd be interested to hear what you have to say.

**Admiral Richardson:** You've articulated it exactly right, and you framed the question just right. It is exactly what that balance in mind, that long term view for peace and stability. Whichever way it goes. That all of our cooperation is framed, within which it's all framed. So while we have had discussions about what we can do to help them with the submarine force should one arise. I know those are all very balanced discussions. Kind of going back to those fundamental things. Let's make sure that it's a professional submarine force, that it's adequately safe. That if something should happen we've got a rescue capability, so that they're stitched into sort of the tactics and techniques of running a modern, safe submarine force.

But with respect to the specific technologies, certainly if Taiwan's going to have first and foremost a decision to make in terms of what those sorts of things, that suit their long term interests, and so it's really navigating that knife edge as we move forward.

**Audience:** Thank you. I'm Peter Shottley, a retired State Department Foreign Service Officer.

For two years in the mid-80s I was a member of the American Incidents at Sea negotiations with the Soviets at the height of the Cold War, sort of in the early Reagan years. My question to you, Admiral, is what are the chances of a similar kind of an Incidents at Sea agreement or negotiations with the Chinese?

**Admiral Richardson:** We have one, actually.

First, let me talk about that Incidents at Sea agreement with the Russians, which is still active and in fact we just concluded the most recent annual validation where we all get together, we talk through the health of the agreement, talk through some incidents that, you know, these are the sorts of things that this agreement is exactly designed to avoid, and let's avoid them going forward. So that is alive and well in the Incident at Sea agreement with Russia.

In Asia we have what's called CUES. It's this, ways to manage our way through unplanned encounters at sea. Okay? And I was just out on the John C. Stennis. I paid a visit to the strike group when they were in the South China Sea. And they're there in a very very busy neighborhood, as you can imagine. So you can see from the Stennis that there were ships from the People's Liberation Army/Navy in visible range and many more outside

visible range that the strike group had awareness of. And as I talked to the strike group commander and the carrier CO and all the warfare commanders in the strike group, that has been, by and large, a very professional what we would call routine types of interactions with all of those ships interacting with each other. Even these freedom of navigation ops have by and large been conducted consistent with the arrangement in this CUES agreement. So we have that in place. We're looking to try and expand that now beyond navies to coast guards and throughout the region.

So we've got these tactical rules, again, kind of an architecture of rules and behaviors that allow us to coexist in there in productive ways, and certainly don't result in a miscalculation or something like that that would, you know, have to be addressed and could potentially lead to some of an unnecessary escalation. So we have that, I guess I the long answer to your question.

**Audience:** Thank you. My name is Jeannie Wynn with Voice of Vietnamese Americans.

What is your reading in the recent two incidents where the Vietnamese flights, SU30, have disappeared or sank in the Sea of Vietnam? And then the rescue group of nine people came out to rescue and also disappear. Do you have any information on that?

And I think Vietnam is trying to ask China to help because that is in the disputed waters, and Vietnam is asking for permission to, for China to come out and help. Would you be talking about that when you come out and meet with the Chinese leadership?

**Admiral Richardson:** It might come up. I'm not aware of any of the details of that incident.

**Audience:** Good afternoon, CNO. Thank you for joining us. Don Lorne, retired naval officer.

For both you and for Patrick, let's move a little bit north, a little more globally a second. Any hope on making progress on UN Convention on Law of the Sea so that the increasingly important area of the Arctic, especially for the United States Navy and the United States, especially with the competition of other global nations, comes into play. Are we going to move off top dead center and get something done so we can have a vote at the table?

**Admiral Richardson:** I'll just open it up and then Patrick can take it from there.

You raise an important point, that as we work through this Court of Arbitration decision and these emerging issues in the South China Sea; as the Arctic recedes and opens up continental shelves that were not available before; and even as more and more of the sea bed becomes accessible because of technologies. This UNCLOS is a terrific set of rules by which we can all adhere. We sort of adhere to them by tradition right now, but signing onto that would be something I would advocate for.

**Dr. Cronin:** Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea would be important. We should do it as a nation. But it's not likely to happen this fall or even in the next two years, perhaps.

One thing we have to worry about in terms of U.S. national security for our allies and partners is our own credibility, though. And as China chips away at the relevance of the rule of law by essentially making their own law, we have to recognize that we're putting all our eggs in the basket of a rules-based system and China's underlining the tension. We don't want to get into that situation. We want to join forces with China and agree with the region as a whole, equally, that we all want rules that we can live by. And UNCLOS is one of those sets of rules we can live by. So we really do need to get serious about this. The time has come.

**Audience:** Gentlemen, Sidney Friedberg, Breaking Defense. Hi.

A question primarily for the Admiral. You mentioned that just having the two carriers out there at once in the Pacific it happens, but it could be anywhere, allows you to do the kind of training we do not normally get to do, or operations, for that matter. We've mostly been parking carriers off places and sending sorties ashore. We've not been doing kind of fleet operations the way we did in the Pacific theater in World War II.

To what extent are we having to sort of reinvent wheels that we just haven't practiced for a while? And to what extent are we having to do a new and more complicated kind of operation with these cross-domain and cyber aspects that you and other Navy leaders have talked about that add a lot of complication?

**Admiral Richardson:** I think there's a little bit of both, right? In the document that the Navy released, a design for maintaining maritime superiority, we talk about the need to sharpen our thinking in terms of blue water operations and warfighting. So these types of opportunities allow us to explore that.

So one might think that in many ways this is sort of back to the future where we are now in competition for maritime superiority in a way that we haven't been in 25 years. This is sort of the manifestation of this return to great power competition.

But even as we do that, we have to make sure that we don't snap back to purely the muscle memory that we did before, because there is so much new to that challenge right now. So if you think about what has happened in space, what has happened in the information domain, what has happened in terms of unmanned autonomy, those sorts of things provide us in new dimensions, new levels of complexity to this challenge.

So certainly everything that we did before, but so much more now because of those added, that added dimensionality, that cross-domain complexity where, you know, we just don't have the luxury of concentrating on undersea, on the surface, and in the air. You've got to go everything from the sea floor, literally, all the way up into space, and you've got to be competitive in this information domain as well. So it's a much more challenging problem.

I will tell you though, that the teams are moving through that extremely quickly. They are really being creative in terms of how they approach that challenge. Coming up with new ways to operate, and very very clever in terms of the way they've stitched together a chance to do that with dual carrier strike groups operating together, it's just another chance to take that up to the next level. So it's been a terrific opportunity for us.

**Audience:** Thank you. Kevin Merritt with NEV Consulting.

From the operational perspective, now that Japan has changed its policy to allow exercise of collective self-defense, how far would you operationally like to see Japan go in terms of integration to the U.S. and networking? For example, would you like to see them get the cooperative engagement capability, integrated fire control? An issue, probably within a year I think the Japanese are going to start talking about a counter-



strike capability. Is that something operationally you would welcome? Or would you see a problem with that?

**Admiral Richardson:** I think that we have been moving steadily closer and closer in our cooperation with Japan. And I talk frequently to my Japanese counterpart, Admiral Takei, who is a very forward thinker in this regard. And so in terms of information sharing, in terms of technology sharing, in terms of exercises that we do together, in terms of just concepts of operations, we are very very close and moving closer all the time.

The new dimension to that too is now we're partnering more and more with South Korea. So that trilateral type of a cooperation is another aspect of this changing dynamic in the region that is very encouraging in terms of another step in this network of partners that is advocating for this rules-based structure out there to manage growth and move this in a direction that continues to be non-confrontational, non-conflict.

**Audience:** Good afternoon. Joe Lieberman.

A lot of people have asked questions, described themselves as retired. I call myself a recovering United States Senator.

Admiral, thanks for your service and your leadership.

I wanted to pose a hypothetical to get directly to the theme of this CNAS meeting. Let's assume election has occurred and the President-Elect calls you in and she or he ask you from your perspective as CNO, what are the top two or three things that I should know and be prepared for, or I suppose in a more direct sense, that you need to help me, the new President, be an effective President?

**Admiral Richardson:** Senator, that's a terrific question. Super insightful. Very consistent with everything that you do, sir, so thank you for that fast ball. [Laughter].

I would say one, my sense is that the next 20-25 years are going to be extremely important for the maritime. The United States has always been a maritime nation. We get 90 percent of our trade from the sea right now. 95 percent of our information rides on undersea cables. We have increasing deposits of energy and those sorts of things that come off the sea floor. So my sense is that this acceleration in the maritime domain and its contribution to our national prosperity is only going to

continue. So your United States Navy is going to be a pivotal capability to provide the stability by which that will grow in a non-confrontational, non-conflict environment. So we want to be ready to meet those responsibilities.

Navies in particular require sort of a steady application of resources. So stable funding, stable commitment, allows us to man, train, and equip that Navy in ways that build confidence with our partners in the industrial base, which is you know, such a key part of not only our national security but our national prosperity. So we would advocate for a steady commitment to keeping this Navy at sea and erasing that readiness debt which is kind of a burden that we carry right now.

And then moving forward I would say that we have it in our bag and responsibilities to make sure that we do that in a way that is completely judicious and responsible that does not miss any opportunity to provide the American taxpayer, the American people with the Navy that they need that addresses all of the opportunities that this new information age is going to bring upon us.

That would be, I think, my pitch to the new President.

**Audience:** Mike [Masetti], PBS On-Line News Hour.

According to Mr. Jehl's newspaper, the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet is at the heart of a criminal investigation, the Fat Leonard case. And that you reportedly have advised 20 flag officers that they may be under legal scrutiny. What kind of effect is this having on fleet operations, particularly gumming up promotions and the movement of high level personnel?

**Admiral Richardson:** Let me back up a little bit and talk about a part of that design for maintaining maritime superiority that I spent a fair amount of effort putting together, and it addresses the core attributes of behavior that allow all of our behaviors to remain consistent with our values of honor, courage and commitment. So those core attributes of things like integrity and accountability, initiative and toughness are going to be extremely important going forward. They are absolutely critical to maintaining trust and confidence, certainly with the American people. And just as important, within our ranks, because it is that trust and confidence which enables us to go off, operate in a decentralized fashion, go over the horizon, if you will, and be confident that you understand the fundamentals

with which that remote commander is going to operate and they're going to bring their team back stronger than when they left in many regards. So we are committed to moving through this, cooperating with the Department of Justice in every way that we can. But we do want to move through it.

And then with respect to how it is affecting operations at sea, the commanders at sea, as you have seen in many other reports in the paper, are operating absolutely brilliantly, making very tough decisions often in very very short time lines. So I couldn't be prouder of those folks that are at sea doing the job right now.

**Audience:** Admiral, Lieutenant General Chun from the Republic of Korea Army.

How do you evaluate the anti-ship ballistic missile developments by the North Koreans? And can you just say a few words about the Japanese, Korean and U.S. fleet cooperation that you see. Is it good, bad? What are the challenges? Thank you.

**Admiral Richardson:** I think the proliferation of anti-ship ballistic missiles is just a fact of life that we're going to have to address. I think I said a few things at the very beginning of my remarks about that. So this is a technology that is upon us and we're just going to have to deal with that from an operational and a technological standpoint.

The fact that it's in the hands of North Korea, a leader who has been less predictable than many of the others, just brings another dimension to that equation.

But the other part of your question is, I think a big part of the solution in terms of maintaining stability, keeping that unpredictability in check, which is this growing trilateral cooperation between the United States, Japan and South Korea. So I think that that is obviously something that I support. We work hard to enhance that type of collaboration everywhere that we can, and is a move forward in terms of this growing regional security architecture that is based on a shared understanding of common values and rules that lead to everybody's prosperity.

**Dr. Cronin:** I'd just add, Doug, a few words on that because the Admiral had mentioned earlier the importance of growing this trilateral cooperation.

North Korea is making that possible, as General Chun knows very well, maybe better than anyone in this room, what North Korea is capable of. So the missile defense cooperation and the exercise that will happen on the margins of RIMPAC is one example of trilateral cooperation.

But also the potential for joining bilateral streams of training on anti-submarine warfare. Since 2010 the United States Navy and Japan has been working on ASW, and since, after the Cheonan incident in 2011, the year after the incident, Korea and the United States have been moving on ASW. So we can put those together and start to cooperate in that area as well.

It would very much help in a third area, namely to go beyond the limited information-sharing agreement that has been struck which is a real step forward, to having an honest to goodness intelligence sharing [GSOMI] agreement.

**Audience:** Frank Luster, retired Marine Corps officer and also a small unit advocate.

My question is about the Mark 6, one of the Navy's newest coastal crafts, 85-foot coastal craft. Can you give us a little insight into how that Mark 6 could be used in the Pacific area, especially looking at the Indonesia island chains, the Philippines? And also, can you give us a little insight into the acquisition strategy of maybe probably getting more Mark 6 craft.

**Admiral Richardson:** I'll address it at a little higher level. Also a small unit advocate, as a part and parcel as a coherent fleet design that addresses all aspects of maritime security. So not every problem can be solved with a carrier strike group or a DDG or one of the innovative things we have going right now, is this Pacific Surface Action Group that's working out there. Just three ships. A little bit different command and control structure as they're being command and controlled by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Fleet, even as they move forward.

But you extend that even further now, and you've got all sorts of opportunities that arise for smaller types of ships, small crews. There are many nations out there and many missions for which those ships, smaller ships are ideally suited. And I would extend that even, you know, the next step is maybe to do as many of those in an unmanned type of structure as you can.

I look forward to, we've got a lot of studies going on right now to take a look at future fleet design, future force structures, and I would think that by the July/August time frame, we're going to have a lot of exciting ideas in terms of how to move that forward.

**Moderator:** This has been a terrific hour. Thank you to all of you for your great questions, and --

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